

MINUTES

FACULTY SENATE – SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023, 3 p.m.

Altgeld Hall 125

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, Illinois

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Arado, Atkins, Barrett, Bohanon, Books, Johnson, McGowan, Nyunt, Scanlon, Vahedian

OTHERS PRESENT: Creed, Valentiner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Faculty Senate (FS) President **B. Creed** called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was verified.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

F. Bohanon moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by **B. McGowan**. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 12, 2023, MINUTES

F. Bohanon moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **A. Vahedian**. Motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. ITEMS FOR FS-SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

A. Brief introduction of committee members and key guests

Introductions were made by all members and guests.

B. History and Work of the FS Social Justice Committee (SJC)

FS President **B. Creed** acknowledged the work already accomplished by the committee and shared two goals for the 2023-24 academic year: finalize projects which are close to completion; and use a systematic process to revisit recommended priorities and develop action plans for the committee's next steps.

1. Prioritized Recommendations and Scope of Work-Fall 2021

A brief history of events leading to the creation of the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee was shared. The ad hoc committee's charge was to "identify factors contributing to institutional racism at NIU, particularly policies, procedures and practices, and take actions to correct them." The ad hoc committee's work culminated in a report shared with the Faculty Senate and later with President Freeman and campuswide. This process resulted in the creation of a permanent Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee, and the identification of five prioritized recommendations (from 20 original recommendations) to guide the committee's initial work.

2. End of Summer 2022 Report

During the 2021-22 academic year, progress was made in a number of areas including campuswide conversations regarding updates to the tenure and promotion process outlined in FS Bylaws Article 8. However, challenges were encountered in other areas of the committee's work including unexpected barriers to data access and lack of administrative support/action in response to the committee's efforts or recommendations. During summer 2022, four faculty members and four graduate/research assistants were supported by the Office of the Provost. In all, progress in operationalizing the prioritized recommendations was made, but it was uneven.

3. 2022-23 Year End Report

The 2022-23 Year End Report summarizing the committee's work will be included in the October 4 Faculty Senate agenda packet and made [available online](#). Highlights include: nearing finalization of a proposal to amend FS Bylaws Article 8 related to tenure and promotion; greater access to data; ONE READ, a faculty/staff common reading and discussion of the book titled, *It's Not Free Speech: Race, Democracy and the Future of Academic Freedom*. Challenges include that efforts to decolonize the curriculum to this point have not been met with success or have not found fruitful ground.

Further conversation among committee members and guests included these points:

- Plans to engage with administrative leadership to learn about what's already taking place at NIU and, thus, inform the work of the FSSJC going forward.
- What is within the purview of FS and what is not? What action steps can FS develop to address issues such as administrative or institutional reticence toward committee recommendations, a plan for ADEI training, decolonizing the curriculum?
- What is the status of the shared equity leadership model?
- What is the status of the anti-racism statement?
- We can adopt a lens of seeing, not just the challenges, but also the progress and/or successes of the committee's work to date.

- Cultural shift requires common goals, which is challenging for a large institution moving in many different directions and with constant turnover.
- What sort of guide will help the committee members consider which recommendations should be prioritized for the next steps of the SJC's work?

B. Creed will reach out to Chief Diversity Officer Carol Sumner regarding when she might be ready to share her plans with the SJC members, including how the SJC fits into those plans.

Committee members were asked to come to the next meeting having familiarized themselves with what's come before, so that conversation can focus on setting a plan for 2023-24 work in the three focus areas.

VII. REPORTS FROM FOCUS AREAS

- A. Academic Affairs – Sheila Barrett
- B. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Natasha Johnson
- C. Institutional Racism – Vicky Books

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

IX. NEW BUSINESS

X. ADJOURNMENT

T. Arado moved to adjourn, seconded by **N. Johnson**. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.